

## LA-UR-21-22255

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Title: Postdoc Mentor Best Practices Presentation

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# Postdoc Mentor Best Practices Presentation



# Mentor Best Practices

## Virtual Offering



LA-UR 21 - XXXXXX

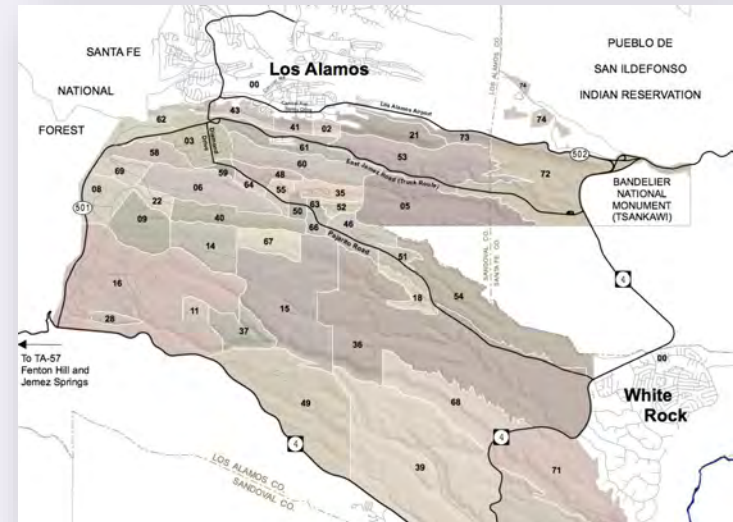
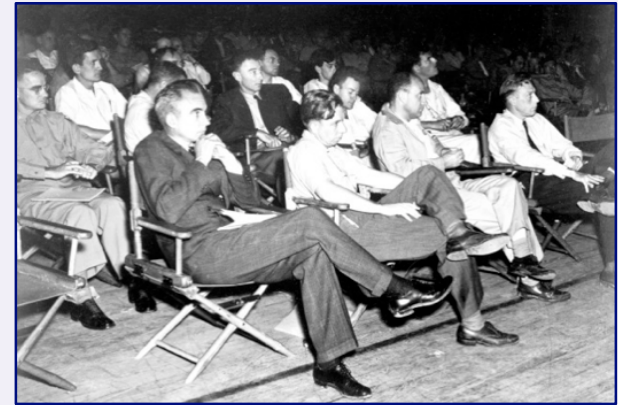
# Some topics for today...

- **Mentoring – why is it important?**
- **Questions for discussion**
- **Mentoring essentials**
- **Enhancing our diversity**
- **New to the lab mentoring**



# Essentials for Postdoc Mentor Success

- LANL is an exciting and complex organization – help your postdoc acclimate and take advantage of our technical environment
- Partner with line management in ensuring postdoc success
- Know when to ask for “help” from other mentors or line management
- Utilize a diversity of perspectives and resources to cultivate the intellectual and professional growth of the postdoc
- Allow postdocs to evolve into their own identity by having a broader view of their careers.....*foster their independence*



# Some questions to help our discussion...

- Who present is an experienced mentor?
- What does a successful postdoc experience look like from a postdoc's perspective?
- What does a successful postdoc experience look like from a mentor's perspective?
- What are the most difficult components to mentoring?



# Establish Relationship with Postdoc

## Nurture the Relationship

### *Establish rapport with postdoc*

- Understand their career goals
- Communicate in an open and honest manner
- Set expectations in a positive and constructive manner
- Provide regular feedback
- Maintain confidentiality
- Address their issues and concerns early and follow through

#### Best Practice Communication

- Smooth onboarding
- Be available
- Have a meaningful encounter at least once a week





# Mentoring Activities

## Postdoc's Intellectual and Professional Growth

*Help them develop intellectually and professionally*

- Ensure research is focused on established goals
- Provide a robust and enriching scientific environment
- Encourage independence and foster new ideas and approaches
- Broaden internal and external contacts in the scientific community
- Create and promote interactions and collaborations
- Share LANL mission and capabilities

### Best Practice Support Professional Growth

- Have clear expectations for:
  - ✓ Publications
  - ✓ Seminars
  - ✓ Professional meetings
  - ✓ Conferences
- Encourage postdocs to present their research and to develop collaborations



# Roles, Responsibilities and Understanding Logistics and Accountability

## *Help them understand how we work and their responsibilities*

- Set expectations and coach the postdoc as needed
- Help them engage with other lab scientists or engineers
- Describe their role in working safely and securely
- Assist in maintaining appropriate training for safety/security and professional development

### **Best Practice Promote Safety/Security**

- Our approach to safety and security may be unfamiliar to new postdocs/employees
- Explain our safety/security protocol and expectations
- Monitor their laboratory work until they are proficient



# Metrics to Measure Success

## Successful Postdoctoral Research Transition

*Understand their career goals early in your relationship*

A PD lifecycle guide.....

- Months 0 - 3 – establish relationship and gauge technical strengths and developmental needs
- Months 3 - 6 – discuss career path
- 1 year – discuss realistic future with more discussion on career path
- 1 year – mentor begins discussions with line management about career path (GL/DL)
- 18 months – internal (conversion) or external (career outside LANL) transition
- 2 years – continue discussion with line management (GL/DL) and work towards transition (i.e., conversion when appropriate)

### Best Practice Meaningful Career Path

- Establish a lifecycle during his/her tenure with you
- Determine career path early
- Develop a career plan
- Engage line management early in the planning



# Increasing Diversity in our Postdoc Pool

- The Postdoc Program is a major pipeline for bringing new talent into LANL
- The Lab is striving for a more diverse workforce and the benefits that result
- A diverse postdoc population supports this goal and will be key to achieving success
- Do you have examples of practices which increased diversity in your own team or group?



# **Something to Think About:**

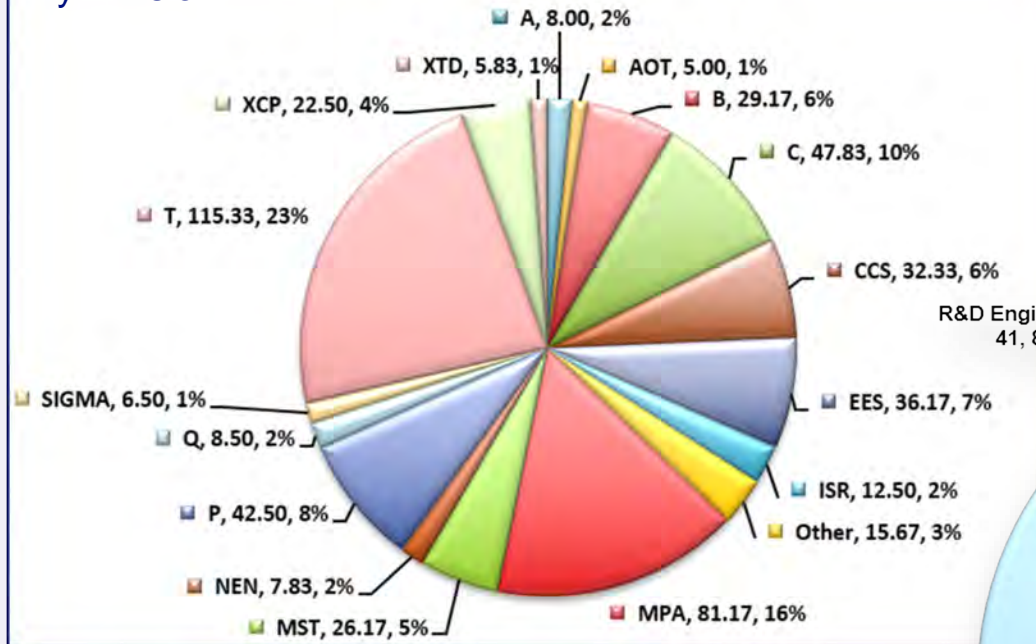
## **We have many new people joining LANL**

- **How many of you mentor recent staff conversions or individuals who are new to the Lab?**
- **They are both early career and experienced**
- **How is mentoring different from mentoring a Postdoc?**
- **How do we best help them acclimate to the Lab?**

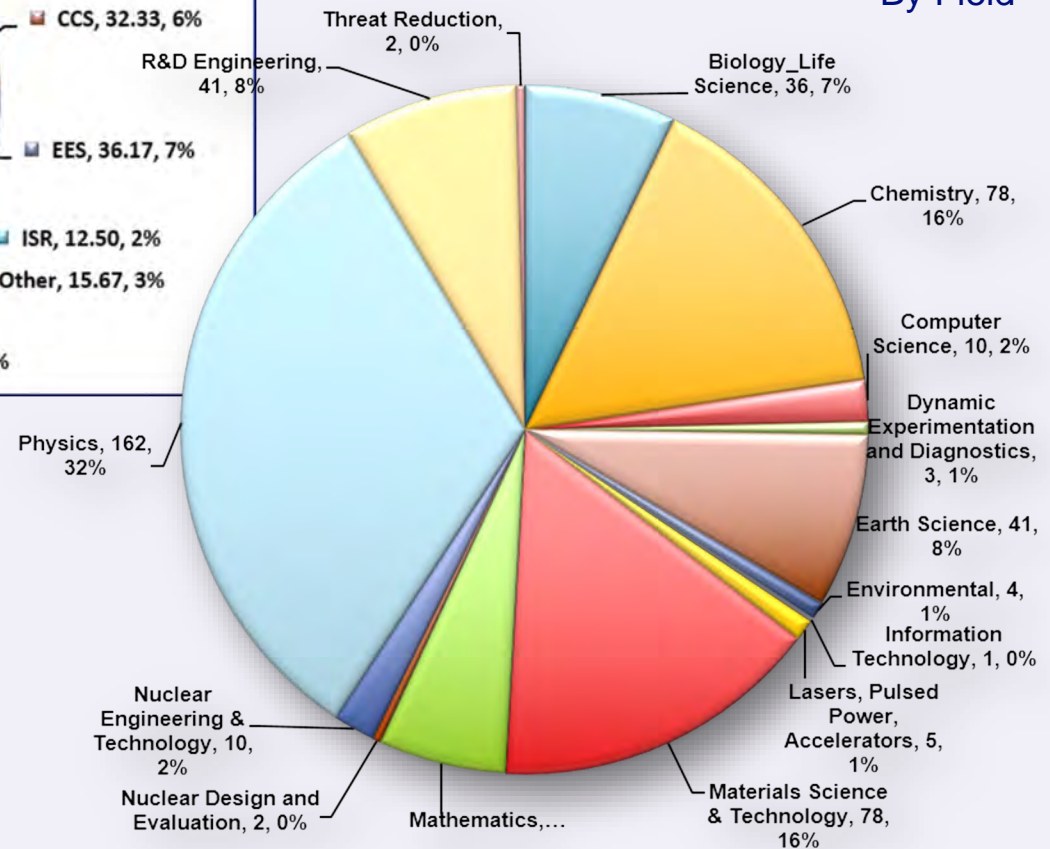


# Postdoc Population as of December 2020 (Total = 503)

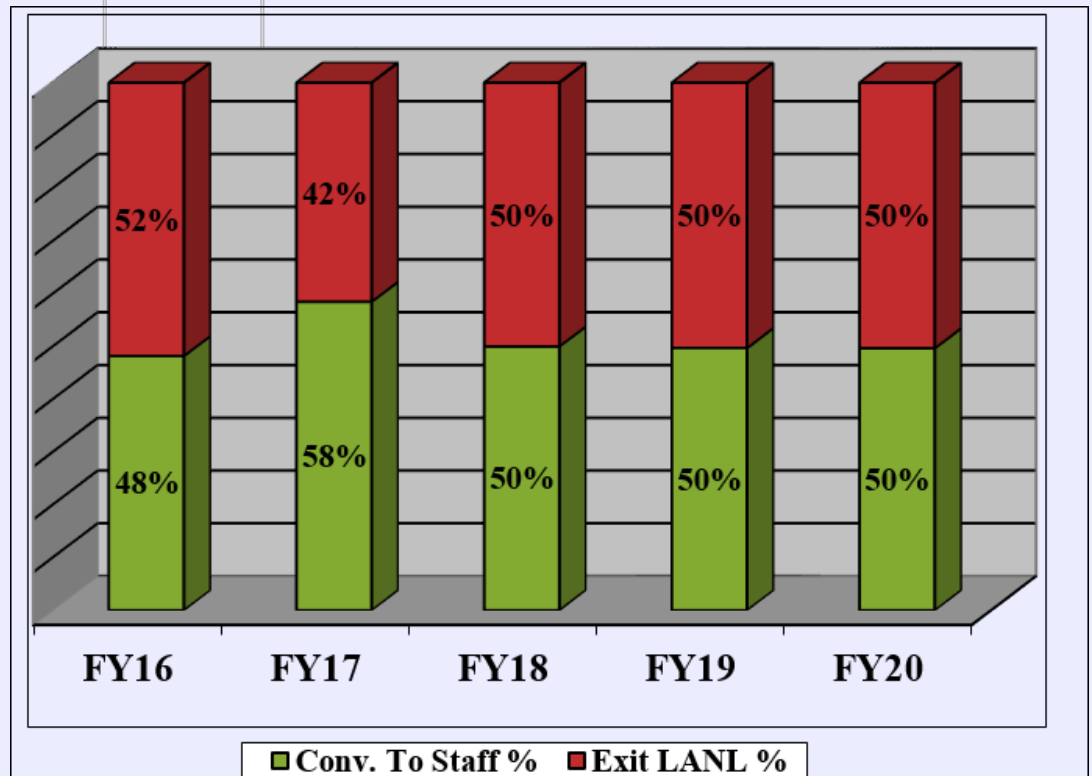
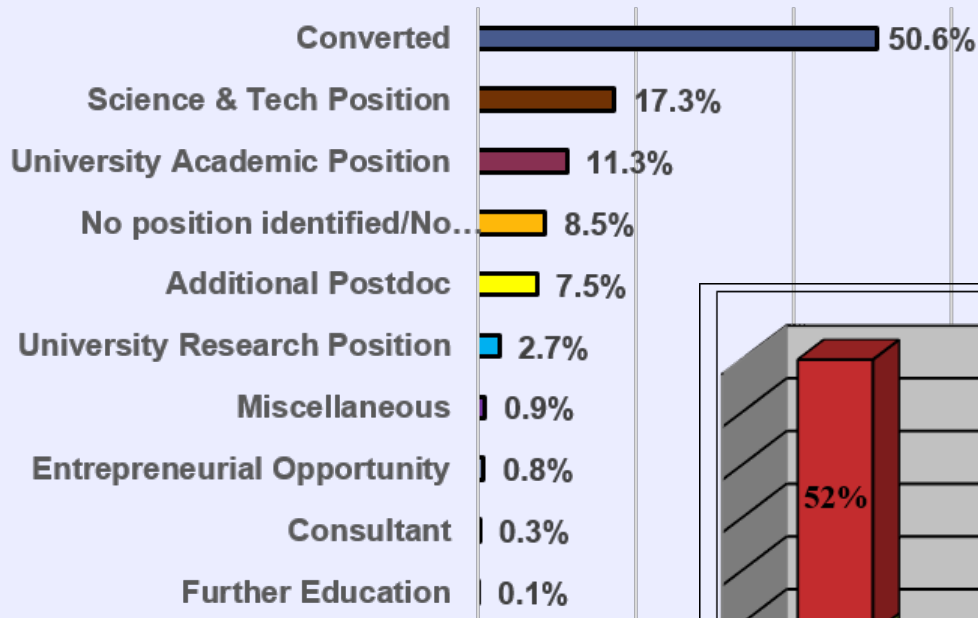
By Division



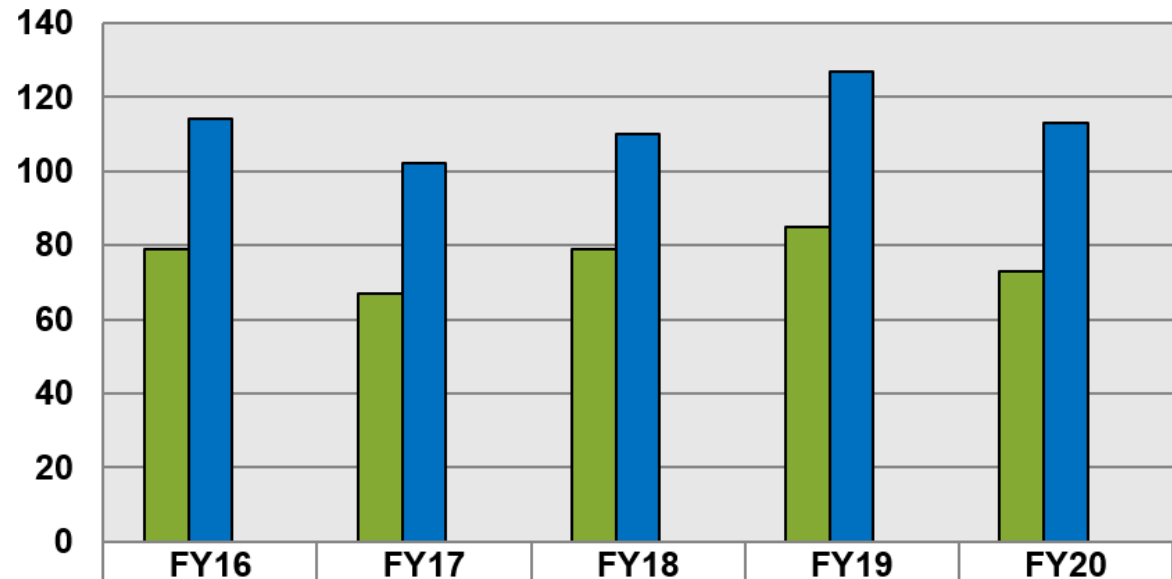
By Field



# Postdocs Exiting the Program



# Postdocs add to the Vitality of the Laboratory and are a Significant Pipeline into the Lab for R&D Positions



<span style="color: green;">■</span> Postdoc Conversions to Scientist and R & D Engineer	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20
	79	67	79	85	73
<span style="color: blue;">■</span> Total PhD Non-Management Scientist and R&D Engineer, Levels 1-3 plus PhD GRA & Postdoc Conversions	114	102	110	127	113
% of Postdoc Conversions to Total PhD Staff Hires	69%	66%	72%	67%	65%

Even with the external hiring surge starting in FY16, an average of 68% (FY16 thru FY20) of all non-management Ph.D., Levels 1-3, hires were LANL postdocs.





